

Postponing Sexual Involvement: Abstinence Counseling and Education

**Satellite Conference
Wednesday, March 2, 2005
2:00-4:00 p.m. (Central Time)**

Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health
Alabama Public Health Training Network

Faculty

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Objectives

- State four ways that abstinence can benefit adolescents and their families.
- Discuss the role of family planning programs in promoting abstinence.
- Describe one major responsibility of family planning counselors with respect to abstinence education.

Objectives

- List three ways to introduce the topic of abstinence to young people.
- Describe the abilities and information needed to present adolescents with information regarding abstinence.

Title X Philosophy

- Science based health advice/promotion
- Emphasis on self determination
- Respect for individuals
- Promotion of reproductive responsibility
- Family PLANNING not just contraception
- Accessibility to a wide range of FP methods
- Knowledgeable workers!

Beware!

- If you work in a FP clinic and think your main job is helping people pick a method of contraception- you are missing the boat!
- Get the bigger picture of helping people take control of their lives and make healthy decisions.
- Good information helps make good decisions.

Which Family Planning Patients?

- Persons not yet sexually active
- Persons who wish to avoid pregnancy and disease
- Persons honoring moral beliefs
- Persons who are sexually active, but choosing temporary abstinence for a variety of reasons
- Everyone!

Family Planning Perspectives

- Abstinence discussion should be part of every FP patient's annual update
- Patients who choose abstinence deserve a specific care plan
 - Teaching, tools, techniques, follow up
- Care plan is specific to THAT particular patient

What Are The Advantages for Teens of Sexual Abstinence?

- Avoid pregnancy
- Avoid STDs
- Promote physical growth and development
- Promote emotional growth and development
- Channel energy into other activities

What Are The Advantages for Parents?

- Opportunity to communicate
- Transmission of family's values
- Protection of family resources
- Increased parenting fulfillment
- Opportunity to advance the family's socioeconomic standing

Types of Abstinence

- No penile/vaginal contact
- No genital/anogenital contact
- No oral/anogenital contact
- No manual/anogenital contact
- No self stimulation

Depends what you want to avoid!

Some Antecedents to Initiation of Sexual Activity

- Single parent, working full time
- High rate of residential turnover
- Single mother's dating/cohabitation status
- Having older friends/boyfriends
- Older sister who gave birth
- Importance of popularity

Teen Choices

- Watching large amount of TV with sexual content
- Peers with sexual activity
- Dating alone
- Dating older persons
- Unconventional or delinquent behavior
- Perceived benefits to sexual activity
- Kissing/necking

Factors Associated with Delayed Sexual Activity

- Girls' participation in sports
- Perceived costs of pregnancy
- Realistic STD education
- Attachment to faith community
- Participation in school clubs
- Perceived personal/social costs of sex
- Plans to attend college

Conversational Approach

- What do your friends think about ...?
- What have you heard about...?
- Why would a person choose to abstain?
- What does "abstinence" mean to you?
- What are you doing to protect yourself from HIV and pregnancy?
- This conversation may bring out myths and misunderstandings about sexuality.

Life Planning Approach

- What do you see your self doing in the next
—year, two years, three years- five years?
- How would getting pregnant affect your plans?
- How would getting an STD/HIV affect your plans?

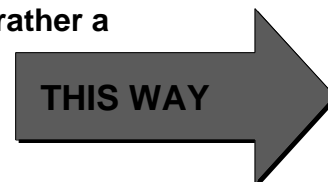
Questions to Gauge Motivation

- What would happen if you got pregnant tomorrow?
- It would be great!
" My boyfriend/mother/friends would be happy"
- "It would be hard, but I'd make it"
- It would be a disaster!
"Granny would kill me; boyfriend would leave", etc.

Low motivation
is not a



but rather a



Low Motivation Needs:

- Strong peer support
- Encouragement and confidence from adult
- Plenty of planning to avoid pressure
- Role playing to practice refusal skills
- Increased life planning assistance
- Hope for something meaningful to look forward to: and knowing how to get there!

High Motivation Needs:

- Reinforcement of motivation
- Skills and techniques
- Peer support
- Support of life plans and assistance keeping to that path
- Hope that goal is attainable!

Abstinence Care Plan

- Purpose for abstaining
- Timeframe for abstaining
- Pros and cons for that individual
- Tools such as CycleBeads, menstrual calendars, fertility awareness
- Techniques such as refusal/negotiation skills
- Follow up plan

Positive Abstinence Messages

- Health safety
- Emotional safety
- Relationship issues
- Social issues
- Spiritual/moral issues

Health Issues

- Teen pregnancy and baby's health
- STDs are harmful, often not obvious to teen, can be permanent, or have long term effects, even life threatening.
- Condoms are not guaranteed to prevent STDs, and may not be very effective in preventing some types.
- Contraceptives have side effects, failure rates, and complications.

Psychosocial Issues

- Worry
- Regret /Guilt
- Loss of self respect
- Debasement of sex
- Fear of commitment
- Anger over betrayal
- Ruined relationships
- Escapism-self medication

Abstinence Busters

- Mixed messages
- Going through the motions
- Quickie counseling
- It's too late
- Appealing your values, NOT the patient's
- Making it all sound too hard
- No follow up

Drugs and Alcohol

- Decreased inhibitions
- Poor decision making ability
- Vulnerability to sexual coercion/violence
- Less likely to use contraception or disease reduction techniques
- Often play a part in initiation of sexual activity

Abstinence Strengtheners

- Continued contact
- "you are worthy" approach
- Clear messages
- "Learn and Serve" programs
- Adult leaders who believe in abstinence and have training
- Abstinence as a lifestyle can be adopted at any time!

#1 Teachable Moment

Pregnancy test visit when the test is **NEGATIVE**:

- How do you feel about not being pregnant? (looking for motivation)
- What made you think you might be pregnant? (myths, sexual practices)
- When would be the best time for you to be pregnant? (life goals and plans)

Helping Parents Help Teens . . .

- Actions speak louder than words!
- Context of family beliefs/traditions.
- Honest discussions of life choices and consequences.
- Parent involvement in everyday life.
- Support for struggling parents by larger community: tutoring and safe activities, non-tolerance of statutory rape.

Remind Parents

- Abstinence talks don't have to be "sex" talks
- Not a "put-down" of your life, but a chance to encourage your child to choose something different
- A little is better than NOTHING
- Find that teachable moment: TV shows, lives of those around you, magazines
- Hopes and dreams: keep those kids busy!

Alabama Abstinence

- Susan Stewart, Director
- Abstinence-only Education program Title V
- www.adph.org/abstinence
- 334-206-2901
- [sstewart@adph.state.al.us](mailto:ss Stewart@adph.state.al.us)
- Promotes abstinence until marriage

Other Resources

National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, May 4, 2005
www.teenpregnancy.org

Campaign for Our Children
www.cfoc.org

Other Resources

MedLine Plus: Teenage Pregnancy
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/teenagepregnancy.html

Girl Power: project of DHHS
<http://www.girlpower.gov/>

Upcoming Programs

Clinical Perspectives on Diabetes
Thursday, March 10, 2005
2:00-4:00 p.m. (Central Time)

The Visually Impaired Patient
(*Home Health Aides & Home Attendants*)
Wednesday, March 16, 2005
2:00-4:00 p.m. (Central Time)